

ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU



VAMPI

#10

MARCH/71

60c

VAMPIRELLA

A WARREN MAGAZINE PDC

**WHY WAS
THIS BEAUTY
FORCED
TO BE WITH THIS
HIDEOUS
MONSTER?**

...See why on Page 49



**DON'T MISS
"THE SOFT
SWEET LIPS
OF HELL!"**

...on page 27

HERE'S ANOTHER CLASSIC OF
HISTORICAL MYTH
SURROUNDING...

VAMPIR'S FEARY TALES

The Face of MEDUSA



IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, **MEDUSA** PAID A FEARSOME PRICE FOR OFFENDING THE GODDESS **ATHENA**. THUS **MEDUSA'S** PRIZE ADSET, HER HAIR, WAS TURNED TO A SWARM OF **SERPENTS**. ALTHOUGH SHE WAS REPORTED TO BE EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL, BUT VAIN... ALL WHO GAZED UPON HER FACE WOULD BE TURNED TO **STONE**! BECAUSE **MEDUSA**, IN HER VANITY, TEMPTED MANY TO GAZE AT HER, SCORES OF MEN PAID WITH THEIR LIVES FOR ONE SCANT LOOK AT HER LOVELINESS.

THE HANDSOME AND HEROIC **PERSEUS** WAS CHOSEN BY THE NOBLE **HERMES** TO DESTROY **MEDUSA**. **PERSEUS** JOURNEYED TO HER LAIR ARMED WITH A SCIMITAR AND A HIGHLY POLISHED PLAIN **SILVER SHIELD** WHERE HE TRICKED **MEDUSA** INTO GAZING AT HER OWN IMAGE IN THE REFLECTION FROM THE SHIELD... THUS TURNING **MEDUSA** HERSELF TO **STONE**.



CENTURIES LATER, THE SHIELD WAS FOUND IN THE DESERT NEAR THE GREEK COAST AND DISCOVERED AFTER CLEANING AND POLISHING TO HAVE AN IMAGE IMPRINTED UPON IT WHICH WAS REPORTED TO BE THE **FACE OF MEDUSA**.

HISTORIANS BELIEVED THE IMAGE WAS SO POWERFUL THAT IT AFFECTED THE MOLECULES WITHIN THE METAL OF THE SHIELD ITSELF AND OVER THE CENTURIES, THE CHEMICAL CONTENTS OF COPPER DEPOSITS IN THE EARTH REACTED UPON THE METAL MUCH LIKE THAT OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING.

VAMPIRELLA

NO. 10

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VAMPIRELLA, PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY WARREN PUBLISHING CO., INC., No. 10 PRICE 60c PER COPY. SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: 6 ISSUES FOR \$3.50 IN THE U.S. ELSEWHERE: \$4.50. EDITORIAL OFFICES AT 145 EAST 32ND STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. SECOND CLASS MAIL PRIVILEGES PENDING AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. PRINTED IN U.S.A. ENTIRE CONTENTS COPYRIGHTED © 1970 BY WARREN PUBLISHING CO. NOTHING MAY BE REPRODUCED IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE PUBLISHER. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE INVITED PROVIDED RETURN POSTAGE IS ENCLOSED; HOWEVER NO RESPONSIBILITY CAN BE ACCEPTED FOR UNSOLICITED MATERIAL. Printed in U.S.A.

VAMPI'S



I think that you should have a Vampiella club. The contents would be the same as in the Creepy club. Membership card, button, etc. plus you could give members a reduced subscription rate or something like that to entice lots of people to join. I also would like to say that I really like your mag, Vampi. It's just as good as Creepy and Eerie.

LARRY CRIPOWSKI
El Segundo, Cal.

BETTER than Creepy
Eerie, Larry.

Vampi, I love you.
JOHN BAUMANN
Northridge, Cal.

Really, John, you must control yourself and learn to write shorter letters. Four words are just too much. Seriously though, thank you for the affection, but do try to control your outburst of emotion.

I've just finished reading the first article in issue #8 and have concluded that the guy who wrote it doesn't know what he's talking about and must have flunked high school biology. This one particular mistake stood out like a sore thumb. If the species of humanoid of Drakulon evolved on a fluid diet, they would never have developed teeth or any kind of biting structures. Also, the predator-prey complex would not exist (all life forms feeding on one nutrient) and hence no "killer instinct". Therefore, obtain a technical advisor before you attempt to invade the realms of sci-fi, otherwise stick to fantasy.

PETE CAROSELLI
Point Pleasant, N.J.

"More series with continuing characters!"

You seem very well knowledgeable in this subject, Pete. Would you be interested in advising us in the future ... for free?

Issue #6 and especially issue #7 were great. They're the first two I've read and if the rest of your books are any indication as to how good these were, well, I expect to be reading every single issue you put out.

BOB GARRISON
Independence, Mo.

Wish we'd get more fans like you, Bob. We expect to give you lot's more to read and if you've missed out on past issues, why not fill out one of the order blanks and send for back issues? Also, to insure not missing out on future issues, take out a subscription. (P.S. Thanks for your sexy sketch of me.)

The other day I picked up Vampi's latest and enjoyed it the most. I dug the superior art so much that I decided to give it a try. I am 15 years old and seriously considering a career in comic art. I was wondering would I have any future in it, what do you think?

KEVIN RICHERT
Peekskill, N.Y.

Of course you have a great chance in becoming a cartoonist, Kevin. With lot's of hard work and studying, you may even attain greatness above and beyond our present artist. Your drawing in Vampi's Flames of this issue shows you already have talent.

In the #5 issue of Vampiella I read a letter from one of your readers, and I was wondering if you had any more info about the running for president of your fan club, because I did not get the issues #6 and #7, did you have some more about it in those two issues, I would sure like you to tell me because I just got #8 and it did not have any further information about it.

M.G.M.
Burbank, Calif.

A Vampi fan club is on the way. No mention yet as to exact date. Details will be worked out in the near future, so watch for it. By the way, are those the initials of your name, or are you a movie studio?



'THE GREATEST!'

IN THE OPINION OF
Sgt. HARRY E. LAGUINTANO

In Vampiella #8 the story "Who Serves The Cause of Chaos" was a masterpiece in its own right. The art and story was fabulous. I've been buying your magazine since the beginning and will keep on buying it. I would love to see more stories with Vampi in it. In the #8 issue, where the prologue began, where it showed Vampiella struggling through the snow, I thought that was one of greatest drawings I've ever seen of her. In my opinion, she is one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen in comics.

Could you do a favor for a sincere fan who happens to be in the Air Force? Could you have Archie Goodwin draw a picture of Vampiella so the guys here at the barracks could use it for a pin-up.
Sgt. HARRY E. LAGUINTANO
Tyndall AFB, Fla.

Archie may be a fantastic writer, but as for his art work ... you fellows would do better to pin up his STORIES of Vampiella and then use your imagination.

What happened to cousin Evily? I haven't seen her for four issues. She seemed to be developing into a semi-permanent feature and I for one miss her.

MICHAEL N. TIERSTEIN
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Cousin Evily will be back in future issues. She's just gathering up terrifying tales to unleash on us. Watch for her soon.

I am a fantasy art fan of both Frazetta and Jones. I know they're great in their re-

spective fields and I miss them. Where are they? I do hope to see more of their work in your magazines.

STEVE WIJTYK
Phoenixville, Pa.

Watch for more Frazetta covers, Steve, in fact, the next one should be coming up in one of my next issues. And here's an advance scoop ... Jeff Jones has a spectacular story he's working on now, to appear in one of our future issue's. You're sure to enjoy it, because it has this indian and a beautiful girl who. . .

"Vampirella is the best thing since Barbarella and Raquel Welch!"

Your magazine is great and far better than *Creepy* or *Eerie*! I'm not knocking them, but that's the way I feel. They, like you, started out wonderfully, then somewhere along the line they went sour. After all, you can only go so far with witches, vampires, werewolves, ghouls and other such delightful characters. It does get rough on writers to come out with a different angle every month. What all three of you need are more series with continuing characters such as Thane, Sork, Tyr, Amazonia . . . and you, of course. All of you have started this and I think you should play up on it more. Also, what ever happened to those illustrated tales of Poe? They were great and should have been continued and branched out into stories by other famous writers. After all, there's hundreds to choose from. You have recently been introducing fantasy tales into your magazines and I hope you'll expand on them. And let's see more stories of you in the future. You're the best thing since Barbarella and Raquel Welch. I'd hate to see you and your magazine go sour. It would be the greatest catastrophe since the sinking of Atlantis.

THOMAS PALLANT
Langhorne, Pa.

More stories dealing with fantasy, Poe, continuing characters, and myself, are in the writing stages now, Tom. As soon as scripts are completed, they'll be handed out to your favorite artist for illustrating. We don't plan to go sour, Tom. Just watch for the sweetening up of THIS magazine.

Vampirella magazine is much better than those put out by your competitors, at least I think so. I'm going to subscribe for your issues just as soon as I get the money, which won't be too long from now.

KEN PARKER
Kentwood, Mich.

I appreciate your comments, Ken. We hope in the future that everything we do rates first place with you. (Especially me.)

After reading three rather mediocre issues of Vampirella, I almost didn't buy no. 8. However, I scanned the list of authors and artists and noticed Archie Goodwin, Gardner Fox, Steve Skeates, and Billy Graham. That was enough to convince me. I bought the issue, and rarely have I been so satisfied by

any horror mag, even *Eerie* and *Creepy*.

"Vampirella: Who Serves the Cause of Chaos?" was a fascinating story. Not only did it clear up a lot about Vampi's past, but it was very thrilling. Goodwin and Sutton make a good team. I've seen enough of Goodwin's stuff in the past to know that when he sets his mind to it, he can suspense most anyone to death (rather unfortunate choice of words, eh?). Is it possible that we will see a feature-length tale of this type every issue? I hope so. Even a ten-pager or so would fill the bill. At any rate, more about the Unholy Seven, sundered circle, etc. And soon!

One complaint: The whole concept of Vampi's origin, the planet Draculon and the whole bit is a little trite. I hope it won't be playing a major part in any of the future stories.

I hate to sound repititious, but "The Demon in the Crypt" was simply superb. I didn't care for Gardner Fox's stories in issue #6, but on sword and sorcery, illustrated form, he has few equals. Is Amazonia going to be a se-

ries? Let's hope so. As always, Graham's art was unusually vivid, some of the best I've ever seen.

"Out of the Fog" was predictable. If it hadn't been for the post-war background, the story would have been terrible.

"Snake Eyes" was rather weird. I'm not sure what to make of it, but I do know that the Spurling art detracted from the story line, rather than aiding it.

I think "Signs of Sorcery" would have been better if it had been expanded. As it was, it was a bit trite with the evil sorcerer wanting the beautiful girl and all. The handsome hero functioned as was expected, complete with corny phrase like "I'll do more than DARE!"

"The Guller" was a good story, but it would have been better, in my opinion, if someone other than Tony Williams handled the art. His styles doesn't hit the spot with me. The way the monster killed itself accidentally was probably the high point of the story.

Well, here's hoping you can supply us with more of

those wonderful Goodwin-Sutton Vampirella stories. If you can get a few more Amazonia tales from Mr. Fox, I will be happy.

Keep up the good work.

MIKE W. BARR
Akron, Ohio



Thank you for your comments, Mike. You've touched on various subjects many of our readers may or may not have agreed with. But in summing up, you've expressed the opinion of quite a few fans, judging from letters we've received concerning the last couple of issues. Unfortunately there wasn't enough space to print them all in this issue. More comments are desired from our readers and we'll certainly make an effort to print as many as possible.

YOU THINK?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK . . . WE ONLY THINK. Send your letters to:

SCARLET LETTERS
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PROLOGUE: ON SUCH A NIGHT AS THIS, SHADOWS WERE EVERYWHERE. **ANTON DELAUDIER** WAS THANKFUL FOR THAT. THE POLICE WOULD BE GLAD TO ARREST HIM. THE ARMY WOULD BE JUST AS GLAD TO SHOOT HIM.

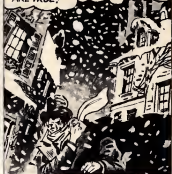
I MUST GIVE UP THE BLACK MARKET, GET OUT WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME.



THE AUTHORITIES ARE GETTING TOO CLEVER, TOO QUICK! AND THE PROFITS ARE GETTING TOO SMALL!

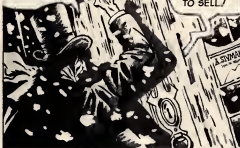


AH, BUT THERE! OLD SIVMAN'S TALLOW SHOP NOW IF ONLY THE RUMORS I'VE HEARD WHISPERED ARE TRUE!



THE CANDLE MAKER WAS AN ALCHEMIST, SOME SAID, OTHERS SAID HE HAD A SECRET TREASURE. ONLY THIS SECOND RUMOR WAS OF INTEREST TO DELAUDIER...

SIVMAN, OPEN UP! I'VE COME ON BUSINESS!



GO AWAY! I HAVE NO TALLOW, NO CANDLES LEFT TO SELL!

BUT DELAUDIER REMAINED PERSISTENT, HAMMERING ON THE DOOR UNTIL...

DID YOU NOT HEAR ME THE FIRST TIME... WAAAA??



NOW BACK INSIDE, MISER! UNLESS YOU WANT YOUR HEAD OPENED BY A BULLET!

BUT I AM STARVING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE! I HAVE NOTHING!

NOTHING? HA! STOP LYING OR YOU'LL NOT EVEN HAVE YOUR LIFE!



WHEN ANTON DELAUDIER WANTED SOMETHING, HE COULD BE PERSUASIVE, VERY PERSUASIVE...

THERE! IN... (GASP)... IN A BOX BEHIND A LOOSE BRICK... MY ONLY TREASURE!



N-NO MORE, MONSIEUR... PLEASE!

BEHIND THE BRICKS, DELAUDIER FOUND A LEATHER CHEST WITH A GOLDEN LOCK...

IF YOU WERE LYING... IF THERE'S NOTHING IN...

(CHOKES) BETTER HAD I LIED! I'M DYING EVEN NOW!



DELAUDIER WOULD HAVE KICKED THE OLD MAN UNCONSCIOUS, JUST TO SHUT HIM UP, BUT...

THAT SOUND! MUST BE AN ASSISTANT BACK THERE!

YES, MURDERER, RUN! BUT COUGH! MY CURSE WILL FOLLOW YOU!



WANT SOMETHING TO REALLY CURDLE YOUR CORPUSCLES? WELL, **RABID READERS**, IF THIS BIT OF FRIGHT FARE DOESN'T SET YOUR PULSE POUNDING, THEN YOU'VE REALLY GOT **TIED BLOOD!** WE'LL FIND OUT AS YOU CONFRONT THE...



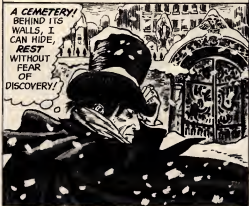
TO ANTON DELAUDIER, THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR MEANT LITTLE. THE SIEGE OF PARIS MEANT MORE ONLY BECAUSE DELAUDIER WAS AMONG THOSE TRAPPED WITHIN THE CITY, BY THE GERMANS. BUT DELAUDIER HAD HAD ENOUGH OF MISERY, COLD AND NEAR-STARVATION. HE WOULD ESCAPE FROM THE ENCIRCLED CITY AND...

I'LL LIVE THE SOFT, EASY LIFE OF A GENTLEMAN. POOR SIVMAN WILL SEE TO THAT OR, AT LEAST, HIS MONEY WILL!



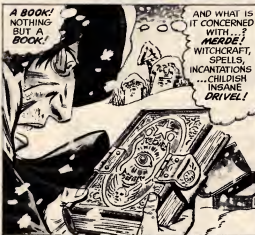
A DOZEN BLOCKS FROM SIVMAN'S SHOP, DELAUDIER CAME UPON JUST THE SORT OF PLACE HE HAD HOPED TO FIND...

A CEMETERY!
BEHIND ITS
WALLS, I
CAN HIDE,
REST
WITHOUT
FEAR
OF
DISCOVERY!



A BOOK!
NOTHING
BUT A
BOOK!

AND WHAT IS
IT CONCERNED
WITH...?
MERDE!
WITCHCRAFT,
SPELLS,
INCANTATIONS
...CHILDISH
INSANE
DRIVE!



D DELAUDIER VAULTED THE LOW WALL AND JOINED THE DEAD...

A **STUBBORN**
LOCK, BUT...
AH! IT'S GIVING!



NO MONEY, NO JEWELS!
JUST A DAMNED BOOK
FULL OF SUPERSTITIOUS
NONSENSE ONLY A
SENILE OLD FOOL
LIKE SIVMAN WOULD
BELIEVE!



D ISAPPOINTMENT FLOODED HIS MIND, NUMBING HIS USUAL CAUTION. IT WAS ALMOST TOO LATE WHEN DELAUDIER SAW THE **SHADOW-SHAPES** CREEPING TOWARD HIM...

THE
POLICE
...OR
SOLDIERS!



BUT IT *WASN'T* THE POLICE NOR WAS IT THE ARMY...

**CURSED
MURDERER!**

AURRGH!

**GREAT
MOTHER
OF GOD!
GHOULS!**

BLAM!
BLAM!



DELAUDIER'S BODY SHOOK FROM SOMETHING OTHER THAN THE COLD AS HE LOOKED DOWN AT THE TWO STILL-TWITCHING BODIES...

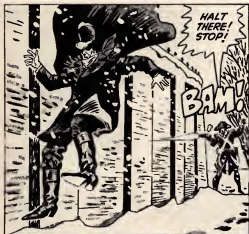
SIVMAN!
SOMEHOW
HE SET
THESE
BRUTES
ON MY
TRAIL!

COULD
IT
HAVE
BEEN
THEM
I HEARD
IN HIS
BACK
ROOM?

SOUNDING FAR AWAY, A POLICE WHISTLE SHRILLED ONLY TO BE ANSWERED BY ANOTHER, MUCH NEARER...

THEY
HEARD
MY
SHOTS!

I
MUST
GET
AWAY
FROM
HERE!



DELAUDIER RAN UNTIL HIS SCREAMING CHEST THREATENED TO CAVE-IN, THEN...

I'VE
LOST
THEM
FOR
THE
MOMENT!
PUFF!
MUST
REST...
GET
MY
BREATH...
GASP!
RELOAD
PISTOL....

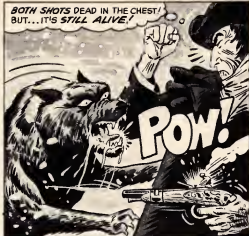
BUT NO SOONER HAD DELAUDIER SLUMPED AGAINST AN ALLEY WALL THAN...

PARIS WAS STARVING. RATS WERE SELLING AT SIXTY SOUS APIECE! WEEKS BEFORE, THE LAST DOGS AND CATS HAD BEEN KILLED AND EATEN!

HOW COULD A DOG
HAVE SURVIVED?



**BOTH SHOTS DEAD IN THE CHEST!
BUT...IT'S STILL ALIVE!**



FRANTICALLY, DELAUDIER SLAMMED THE HEAVY SILVER
GUN BUTT AGAINST THE ANIMAL'S SKULL...

MUSTN'T
LET HIM
GET
MY
THROAT...

HE'D
TEAR
IT
OUT
WITH
THOSE
TEETH!



GAASP

IT'S NO DOG!
IT'S A WOLF!



THE
WOLF...
TURNING
INTO
A
MAN!



OVERHEAD, THE DARK CANOPY OF SNOW CLOUDS
OPENED FOR A MOMENT, BRINGING THE ANSWER
TO DELAUDIER'S SHAKEN MIND...

FULL MOON...
WEREWOLF!



AGAIN DELAUDIER FLED, RELOADING ON THE
RUN, BUT THIS TIME NOT FROM THE POLICE...
OR THE ARMY.

SIVMAN'S
CURSE...
IT'S
TRUE!
HE'S
SENDING
THE
AGENTS
OF
HELL
AFTER
ME!

FIRST
GHOULS,
THEN A
WEREWOLF!



LONG MINUTES LATER, DELAUDIER
SLID AROUND A CORNER, INTO...



STOP
HIM!

SHOOT
TO
KILL!



BULLETS WHIZZED BY, CUPPED AT HIS
CLOTHES, BUT DELAUDIER REACHED THE
MOORED CRAFT UNHARMED AND...

THERE!
THE
LAST
LINE!

I'M
FREE!



THE BALLOON SLID INTO THE SKY, LOSING ITSELF AMID
THE MIST AND FALLING SNOW. THE LAST GUNSHOT
DIED, LEAVING ONLY SILENCE...

I'VE
BEATEN
THEM
ALL...

THE
POLICE.
THE
ARMY.
EVEN
SIVMAN'S
CURSE!



YOU'VE
BEATEN
SIVMAN'S
CURSE?

I THINK
NOT,
MONSIEUR
DELAUDIER!



IT WASN'T
DIFFICULT,
MONSIEUR!



NOT
DIFFICULT
AT
ALL...
FOR
A
VAMPIRE!

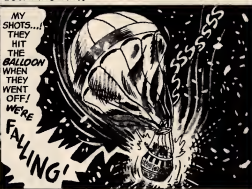
I'LL
SHOOT...
I'LL...
NO!



INSANE DESPERATION SEIZED DELAUDIER. HE FOUGHT LIKE A CRAZED ANIMAL, BUT NOTHING COULD STAND AGAINST THE **SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH** OF THE CREATURE THAT GRIPPED HIM, CRUSHED HIM BACK... FOR THE KILL!



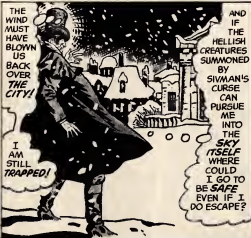
THEN, **BEYOND** THE HORRIBLE HELPLESSNESS FLOODING HIS BODY, **BEYOND** THE HOT, FETID BREATH THAT SPILLED ACROSS HIS THROBBING JUGULAR, DELAUDIER SENSED SOMETHING, **HEARD** SOMETHING... THE HISS OF **ESCAPING AIR!**



FALLING, BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH TO STOP THE **GLEAMING FANGS** WHICH STUNG NEEDLE-LIKE AT HIS THROAT; NOT FAST ENOUGH TO HALT THE **BLACK POOL OF OBLIVION** REACHING FOR HIM... NOT UNTIL THE LAST **TWO HUNDRED FEET**. THEN...



DELAUDIER AWOKE, SHOCKED TO BE ALIVE. HE ROSE UNSTEADILY, WEAK FROM THE BLOOD HE HAD LOST, AND VIEWED THE MIRACLE THAT HAD SAVED HIM.



BUT ANTON DELAUDIER WAS A MAN WHO HAD LONG USED HIS WIT TO BUY **SURVIVAL**. AND NOW, EVEN AS **HORROR AND HYSTERIA** THREATENED TO OVERCOME HIM, THAT WIT STILL FUNCTIONED...

NOM DU CHIEN!
I AM A FOOL!
I HAVE LET SHEER **PANIC** DRIVE ME FROM THE VERY THING THAT COULD **SAVE** ME!

SIVMAN'S BOOK! HE MUST HAVE TAKEN THE CURSE FROM THERE! WHY ELSE WOULD HE CONSIDER IT SUCH A **TREASURE?**! AND I CAN FIND A SPELL IN IT TO **COUNTER** WHAT HE'S DONE!

RECKLESSLY, DESPERATELY, DELAUDIER RACED THROUGH THE SHADOW-HAUNTED STREETS, HEEDLESS OF THE CHILL WIND KNIFING AT HIS BODY, THE FALLING SNOW STINGING HIS FACE...



MUST BE QUICK! WHO KNOWS WHAT FIENDS, WHAT DEMONS ARE HUNTING ME, STALKING ME AT THIS VERY MOMENT!

MON DIEU! WHAT IF THE BOOK IS NOT WHERE I THREW IT?

WHAT IF THE POLICE--?

HIS GAZE TORE FRANTICALLY AT THE GRAVEYARD DARKNESS. THEN RELIEF SURGED WARMLY THROUGH HIM AS...



I SEE IT!

DAMNABLE SNOW ALMOST HID IT FROM ME!

SUDDENLY, AS ANTON DELAUDIER RUSHED FOR HIS GOAL, A SOUND PIERCED THE CEMETERY'S STILLNESS. THE SOUND OF FROZEN EARTH CRACKLING, CRUMBLING, GIVING WAY...



MOTHER OF GOD! SO THIS IS WHAT SIVMAN'S CURSE NEXT SENDS TO DESTROY ME...

THE SOUND GREW AS ALL AROUND HIM THE EARTH GAVE UP SHAMBLING, DECAYING HORRORS WHICH HAD ONCE SLEPT SILENTLY IN ITS DEPTHS...



... THE DEAD!



LIVING CORPSES TO AVENGE THE OLD MAN!



WELL, YOU ARE TOO LATE, THINGS OF HELL!



I HAVE THE BOOK!

WITHIN ITS PAGES IS THE POWER TO SEND YOU BACK TO THE GRAVE...



... TO FREE ME OF THE CURSE!

ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ...

... OPEN THE BOOK TO THE INCANTATION... OPEN THE BOOK! WHY CAN'T I... OPEN THE BOOK? NO...



HMM... I'D SAY NOTHING SHORT OF A SPRING THAW WILL HELP OL' ANTON, AND THAT SEEMS TO BE A LONG WAY OFF!

I GUESS THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THE BOOKS HE BORROWS... IT MAY HAVE BEEN COOL LEAVING IT IN THE SNOW, BUT IT SURE WASN'T SMART!

AND, AS THE TWISTED, GROTESQUE SHADOWS MOVED SLOWLY, INEVITABLY ACROSS THE SNOW TO ENGULF ANTON DELAUDIER, HIS BLEEDING FINGERS CONTINUED TO CLAW FRENZIEDLY, FUTILELY AT THE PAGES OF SIVMAN'S BOOK... PAGES THAT HAD FROZEN SOLIDLY TOGETHER AFTER HE CAST THE BOOK IN THE SNOW!

THE END



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NOW, THE STORY OF A STRANGE ATTACHMENT, WHICH, LIKE SO MANY ATTACHMENTS, MUST INEVITABLY LEAD TO...

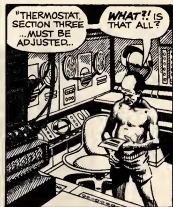
The MARRIAGE



HE HAD JUST FALLEN ASLEEP, AFTER A LONG AND TIRING DAY, A BORING AND MEANINGLESS SIXTEEN HOURS. THEN, THE SOUNDS STARTED, THE LOUD AND DISTURBING SOUNDS, PULLING HIM AWAY FROM HIS BLISSFUL WORLD OF DREAMS, AND THROWING HIM BACK INTO HIS BEDROOM, BACK INTO THAT SMALL WALLED-IN WORLD OF DEPRESSING REALITIES...



HE READ THE CRYPTIC, TYPEWRITTEN MESSAGE...





IT'S **TWO O'CLOCK** IN THE MORNING! COULDN'T THIS HAVE WAITED UNTIL I **GOT UP?** I'D LIKE TO GET SOME **SLEEP... JUST ONCE** IN MY LIFE!



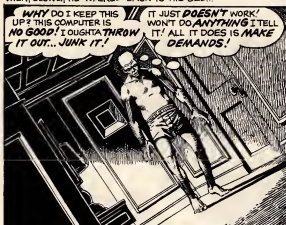
THE MACHINE, OF COURSE, SAID NOTHING. IT COULDN'T ANSWER... COULDN'T REPLY. ALL IT COULD DO WAS MAKE DEMANDS... HE OPENED THE DOOR TO SECTION THREE...



THERE! HOW'S THAT?

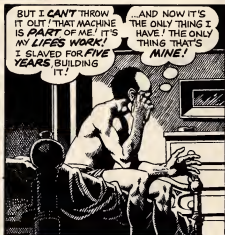
FINALLY, HE LOCATED THE THERMOSTAT...

THEN, SLOWLY, HE WALKED BACK TO HIS BED...



WHY DO I KEEP THIS UP? THIS COMPUTER IS **NO GOOD!** I OUGHTA **THROW IT OUT... JUNK IT!**

IT JUST **DOESN'T** WORK! WON'T DO **ANYTHING** I TELL IT! ALL IT DOES IS **MAKE DEMANDS!**



BUT I **CAN'T** THROW IT OUT! THAT MACHINE IS **PART OF ME!** IT'S **MY LIFE'S WORK!** I SLAVED FOR **FIVE YEARS**, BUILDING IT!

...AND NOW IT'S THE ONLY THING I HAVE! THE ONLY THING THAT'S **MINE!**

FIVE YEARS! FIVE LONG AND WASTED YEARS. IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WEREN'T JUST THE TWO OF THEM... THE MAN AND THE MACHINE. THERE WAS A GIRL, TOO SHE LOVED HIM, AND THEY WERE BOTH TRULY HAPPY...



THIS IS WONDERFUL,
JOHN! OUR **BEING**
TOGETHER
LIKE THIS!

COULDN'T WE DO IT
MORE **OFTEN?** SPEND
A **LITTLE MORE**
TIME **TOGETHER?**
MUST YOU **WORK**
SO MUCH OF
THE TIME?

DOROTHY,
I **PROMISE**
YOU... IT
WON'T ALWAYS
BE THIS WAY...

I'M NOT JUST
DOING THIS FOR
ME! IT'S FOR
US!

THIS **COMPUTER** I'M
WORKING ON ISN'T ONLY
GOING TO **HELP ME** WITH
MY WORK! ONCE WE'RE
MARRIED, IT'LL ALSO **HELP**
YOU WITH **YOUR**
CHORES!

THE COMPUTER HAD BEGUN AS
SOMETHING SMALL...

...BUT SOON IT BECAME AN
OBSESSION. HE SPENT
NEARLY EVERY WAKING
HOUR WORKING ON IT. HE
WANTED IT TO DO EVERYTHING

AND FINALLY...

YOU HARDLY
EVER SEE ME
AT ALL ANYMORE!
YOU'VE GOT TO
MAKE A
CHOICE...
IT'S EITHER
ME OR THAT
MACHINE!

BUT,
DOROTHY...

HE WAS ASLEEP NOW,
DREAMING OF THE
WONDERFUL TIMES HE
AND DOROTHY HAD HAD.



AN OF A MARRIAGE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN...



AND, THEN SUDDENLY...

CLIK!

NO, NOT AGAIN!

Whirrrr!
TAP!



I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!

Whirrrr!

CLIK!
TAP!

TAP!

HE JUMPED OUT OF BED... RUSHED TOWARD THE MACHINE... THE CREATION THAT HAD RUINED HIS LIFE...



HE THREW HIS FIST INTO THE MACHINE... BROKE THROUGH THE METAL SKIN... AND SUDDENLY, AN ELECTRICAL CHARGE COURSED THROUGH HIS BODY...

AARRRGH!

NOW, YEARS LATER HE IS AGAIN PULLED AWAY FROM THE BLISSFUL WORLD OF DREAMS BY THE LOUD CLICKS AND WHIRRS...



CLIK!

BZZZZZ!

TAP!

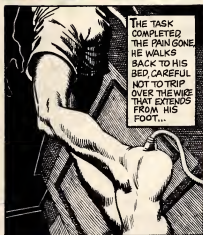
TAP!
TAP!

CLIK!

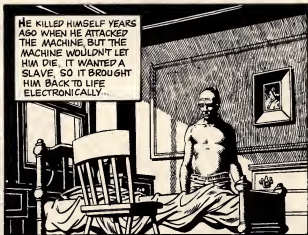
Whirrrr!

TAP!

NOW, THERE IS PAIN SHOOTING THROUGH HIS HEAD... AND HE KNOWS THE PAIN WILL STAY WITH HIM, UNTIL HE HAS DONE AS THE MACHINE INSTRUCTS...



THE TASK COMPLETED THE PAIN GONE. HE WALKS BACK TO HIS BED, CAREFUL NOT TO TRIP OVER THE WIRE THAT EXTENDS FROM HIS FOOT...



HE KILLED HIMSELF YEARS AGO WHEN HE ATTACKED THE MACHINE, BUT THE MACHINE WOULDN'T LET HIM DIE. IT WANTED A SLAVE, SO IT BROUGHT HIM BACK TO LIFE ELECTRONICALLY...

AND, TO MAKE SURE IT IS ALWAYS OBEYED, THE MACHINE CAUSES THE PAIN. BUT NOW, THE MACHINE HAS BEEN SATISFIED, THE PAIN HAS VANISHED, AND HE IS AGAIN FREE TO THINK HIS OWN THOUGHTS... FREE TO THINK THAT SAME SIMPLE THOUGHT HE HAS BEEN THINKING FOR YEARS AND CENTURIES TO COME...

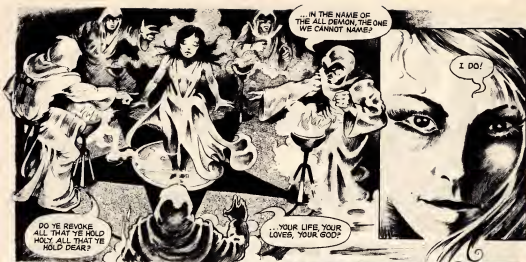


WHAT HAVE I DONE TO MYSELF? IS THERE NO WAY OUT OF THIS? IS THERE NO ESCAPE?

BUT NO ANSWERS COME FROM THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS, ONLY A LOW STEADY HUM... THE SOUND OF A PERFECTLY FUNCTIONING SMOOTHLY RUNNING MACHINE.

AND I GUESS THINGS WILL STAY THAT WAY UNTIL THE NEXT TIME THE COMPUTER NEEDS A REPAIR... AND THE NEXT... AND THE NEXT... AND THE NEXT...







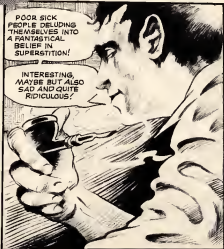
'EYE OF NEWT TOE OF FROG'

LIKE THE
MENU! THEN
JOIN ME AS WE
TAKE THE PLEASANT
CASE OF MELANIE
ROGERS, HOUSE-
WIFE WITH A
LOVING HUSBAND,
AND PERHAPS A
LITTLE TOO VIVID
IMAGINATION!



"KEEPING THE
SECRETS OF THE
SABBATS...
THIS IS UTTERLY
FASCINATING,
PAUL!"

...AND PURE
JUNK! DON'T
LEAVE THAT
PART OUT
MELANIE!



POOR SICK
PEOPLE DELUDING
THEMSELVES INTO
A FANTASTICAL
BELIEF IN
SUPERSTITION!

INTERESTING,
MAYBE BUT ALSO
SAD AND QUITE
RIDICULOUS!



AFTER PAUL HAS LEFT, AND SILENCE DEEPENS IN THE GROWING NIGHT...



THE NEXT MORNING FINDS MELANIE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY...RESEARCHING UNDER OCCULT...





WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, MELANIE? DON'T YOU HAVE AN ANSWER?



WH-WHERE DID YOU FIND IT?

IN THE CLOSET, I WAS LOOKING FOR MY OLD HAT WHEN I CAME ACROSS THIS... THIS PIECE OF TRASH! I'M TELLING YOU ONLY ONE MORE TIME, MELANIE! I DON'T WANT YOU RUINING YOUR MIND WITH THIS JUNK!



IT'S A LIBRARY BOOK, OR ELSE I WOULD HAVE DESTROYED IT... BUT I WANT IT OUT OF THE HOUSE, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? I DON'T LIKE THIS, MELANIE, NOT AT ALL!

WIND RATTLES THROUGH THE WALLS, A STARK WIND, TOO COLD FOR A WARM APRIL EVENING... A SMELL OF BURNING INCENSE, THE ODOR OF TOASTED FLESH...



I WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT PAUL BARGING IN TONIGHT! HE'S AT ANOTHER ONE OF HIS OLD CLUB MEETINGS! AH, THIS OLD BOOK, "EYE OF NEWT"... BRAR! LUCKY I FOUND THAT STRANGE LITTLE STORE!



THEN...

WELL, ISN'T THAT TOO BAD?... YOU DON'T LIKE IT?

SO I'M SUPPOSED TO DROP EVERYTHING... HAM! WELL, MISTER, YOU'VE JUST MADE UP MY MIND FOR ME!

GOLDEN FLAMES LICK THE MISTY AIR, AN AURA OF DARKNESS INTRUDES INTO EVERY CORNER OF THE ROOM FILLING IT WITH A SENSE OF IMPENDING DEATH...



ETUST MERRANIR, BANTRUM
DARTH! GARTHURUS BELMETERATUP
MOC!...TRST NAR FOU, CARNRY
BELINDA BEN ORAM!

FROM FAR OFF IN THE PIT
OF ETERNITY A BREEZE OF
NOTHINGNESS STIRS AND
GROWS, LIT INTO EXISTENCE
BY THE ENCHANTMENT
FANNED BY GROWING
FERVOR...

ALL FATHER, I
GIVE MYSELF TO YOU!
TAKE ME IN YOUR HANDS,
HOLD ME TO THE LIGHT
OF FOREVER, NAMELESS
ONE FROM FARTHEST
TIME, HEAR ME!

BY THE SEVEN
ROADS OF FIRE!
THE SEVEN FLAMES
OF PERIL LET THE
MIGHTY FORCES
TREMBLE, THE
WATER SET
TO BOIL...

AND SUDDENLY THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH SEEM TO GIVE AWAY, SO SPINNING AWAY INTO ENDLESS CHAOS AS...

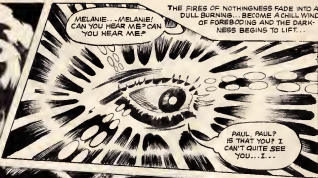


OH, MY
GOD!

MELANIE...

WE HEAR YOU!





MELANIE...MELANIE!
CAN YOU HEAR ME? CAN
YOU HEAR ME?

THE FIRES OF NOTHINGNESS FADE INTO A
DULL BURNING... BECOME A CHILL WIND
OF FOREBODING AND THE DARK-
NESS BEGINS TO LIFT...

PAUL PAUL?
IS THAT YOU? I
CAN'T QUITE SEE
YOU...I...

PAUL...
PAUL?

I HEARD YOU
SCREAMING!

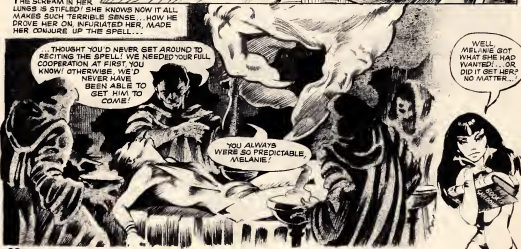
A DREAM? WAS
IT ALL ONLY THAT
...JUST A DREAM?
I WAS SO...SO
FRIGHTENED!

SOMEBODY
WOULD HAVE HEARD
YOUR SCREAMING! WE HAD
TO STOP YOU BEFORE THEY
DID!

PAUL!!
WHAT'S HAPPEN-
ING? WHAT-?

AND THEN HER
EYES FOCUSED! THE
GRAYS RECEDED IN
TO BLINDING LIGHTS
...AND SHE SEES...

THE SCREAM IN HER
LUNGS IS STIFLED! SHE KNOWS NOW IT ALL
MAKES SUCH TERRIBLE SENSE... HOW SHE
DROVE HER ON, INFURIATED HER, MADE
HER CONJURE UP THE SPELL...



...THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET AROUND TO
RECITING THE SPELL! WE NEEDED YOUR FULL
COOPERATION AT FIRST, YOU
KNOW! OTHERWISE, WE'D
NEVER HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO
GET HIM TO
COME!

YOU ALWAYS
WERE SO PREDICTABLE,
MELANIE!

WELL,
MELANIE GOT
WHAT SHE HAD
WANTED!... OR
DID IT GET HER?
NO MATTER...

NOW, FEN-FIENDS AND OTHER UNNATURAL CREATURES...COME WITH US TO A GARBAGE-LITTERED SLUM IN A MAJOR EASTERN CITY...AND MEET A FEARSOME FEMALE WITH A HEART OF GOLD...OR TINFOIL ANYWAY...A MACABRE MISS WITH--

The soft, sweet! LIPS of HELL!

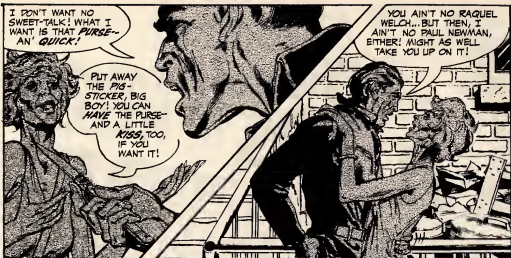


A STILL NIGHT ALONG THE WHARVES...
A PLACE WHERE FEAR AND DANGER
LURK IN EACH WISP OF FOG...

...A TIME FOR PREYING...

AWRIGHT,
LADY, HOLD IT
RIGHT THERE!

SURE,
HANDSOME!



IT IS DONE,
AS IT HAS
BEEN DONE
SO OFTEN
BEFORE... A
MAN PERISHES
IN ONE FINAL,
HIDEOUS
PAROXYSM
OF PLEASURE...
AND AN AGED
WOMAN
SUDDENLY
FILLS WITH
YOUTH AND
OVERWHELMING
LOVELINESS...

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS SHE HAS ROAMED THE EARTH, USING HER BEAUTY AS A LURE-- AND SUCKING LIFE FORCE FROM THE LIPS OF HER CONQUESTS...

HER NAME IS KIJA-- AND SHE IS A SUCCUBUS!



PARDON ME, MISS... I CAN'T HELP NOTICIN' YOUR DRESS IS TORN! YOU IN ANY TROUBLE?

NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE, THANKS!

MAYBE YOU BETTER HOP IN, ANYHOW! NO CHARGE...

...IT'S DANGEROUS FOR A PRETTY GIRL TO WANDER AROUND THIS NEIGHBORHOOD! I OUGHTTA KNOW... I GREW UP IN IT!

JUST TELL ME WHERE YOU'RE GOIN' AND I'LL SEE YOU GET THERE-- ON THE HOUSE!--OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY, ON THE CAB!

YOU'RE VERY KIND!

KIJA OBSERVES THE DRIVER... HE IS STRONG, VITAL... HE COULD PROVIDE MUCH NOURISHMENT... BUT SHE IS SATED! SO SHE CONTENTS HERSELF WITH DIRECTING HIM TO THE ROOMING HOUSE WHERE SHE CURRENTLY RESIDES...



HERE WE ARE! UH... BY THE WAY! MY NAME'S MICK POLLARD!

I'M KIJA... SMITH!

I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I'M BEIN' PUSHY... BUT I GOT A COUPLE TICKETS TO THE FIGHT TOMORROW NIGHT! I WONDER IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO!

WHY, CERTAINLY, MR. POLLARD!

GREAT! I'LL PICK YOU UP AT SEVEN-THIRTY!



THERE'S SOMETHING... SWEET... ABOUT MR. POLLARD!-- SOMETHING GALLANT!



BUT ALSO SOMETHING VERY, VERY... NOURISHING!



AND, LATER...

KIJA... I WANT YOU TO KNOW I AIN'T GONNA TAKE THAT DIVE! MAYBE A MONTH AGO, I WOULD'A...

YOU'RE SWEET, MICK!-- THE SWEETEST MAN I'VE EVER MET!

... BUT NOW... WELL, I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF YOU THINKIN' BAD OF ME! I'M GONNA WIN-- FOR YOU!

MY... GOOD... GOSH! WHEN WE KISSED, I FELT SOMETHIN' LIKE A MILLION VOLTS OF... OF LIFE...

GOODNIGHT, MICK!

THAT'S NEVER-- NEVER HAPPENED! NOT IN A THOUSAND YEARS! INSTEAD OF TAKING THE VITAL FORCE... I GAVE IT!

I SIMPLY DON'T... UNDERSTAND! I GAVE IT... AND I FELT WONDERFUL!

HEY THERE, MISSY! I GOT THE NEW SEARS, ROEBUCK CATALOG TADAY! YA WANNA SEE? HUH... DO YA? PLEEZE!!

I'D LOVE TO!

I'LL POUR US SOME ELDERBERRY WINE AN'...

HE'S POSITIVELY REPULSIVE! BUT A MEAL'S A MEAL...

A WEEK PASSES... A WEEK FILLED WITH STRANGE, ALIEN EMOTIONS... ALMOST AGAINST HER WILL, KIJIA GOES TO THE GARDEN, BUYS A TICKET, AND FINDS HERSELF WATCHING A BRUTAL SPORT THAT WAS YOUNG WHEN SHE WAS, EONS PAST...



PLEASE, MICK--
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF!

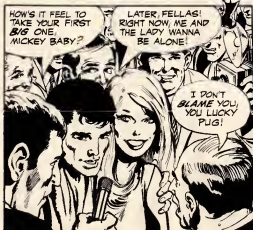
NOT
TO WORRY,
ANGEL!



HOW'S IT FEEL TO
TAKE YOUR FIRST
BIG ONE,
MICKEY BABY?

LATER, FELLAS!
RIGHT NOW, ME AND
THE LADY WANNA
BE ALONE!

I DON'T
BLAME YOU,
YOU LUCKY
PUG!



MY MANAGER SAYS IN SIX MONTHS I'LL HAVE A SHOT AT THE **CHAMP!** HE SAYS I'M GOIN' STRAIGHT TO THE **TOP--**

--ONLY IT WON'T MEAN **NOTHIN'** UNLESS YOU'RE ALONGSIDE ME!

BUT YOU DON'T **KNOW** ME, MICK! ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT I'VE BEEN...

DON'T **KNOW--** AND DON'T **CARE--!**

WE **WARNED** YOU, POLLARD! GET DRESSED! WE GOT A CAR WAITING AT THE BACK ENTRANCE!

YER GOIN' FER THAT **SWIM** WE PROMISED YA...

AN' THE **BROAD'S** COMIN', TOO! IT'S A SHAME... BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE NO **WITNESSES!**

RUN, KISA!

Thopp

SHE AIN'T **RUNNIN'** NOPLACE...

AN' NEITHER IS THE **HERO!**

WE'D BETTER **FINISH** IT HERE!

PLUT PLUT PLUT PLUT

BOK





NA... *NO!*
N... AUWWWG!



I'VE PAID THEM
FOR WHAT THEY
DID TO YOU,
DARLING... I'VE
REVENGED YOU!

BUT THAT
WON'T BRING
YOU BACK...

NOTHING WILL
BRING YOU BACK!
AND SO MY
REVENGE IS
HOLLOW... FUTILE...



I'VE DISCOVERED THE THING--
THE *MAGNIFICENT* THING--
MORTALS CALL LOVE...
TOO LATE!

ONCE MORE,
I SHALL
KISS...



IT... IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN!
THE VITAL FORCE... GOING
FROM ME-- TO MICK!

TAKE IT,
DEAREST--
TAKE IT
ALL!



ALL...

...ALL...

PERHAPS IT IS HOURS... PERHAPS ONLY MOMENTS...
MICK POLLARD STIRS, SITS, AND CRIES OUT--



WHERE ARE
YOU? KIKI!

cries out--and receives no answer.
FOR OF THE WOMAN THAT WAS NOT A
WOMAN THERE IS NOTHING LEFT, SAVE
A FEW SCRAPS OF CLOTHING AND A
WISP OF DUST, AND A MEMORY...



TOO BAD ABOUT OUR MESMERIZED MISSY TAKING A
POWDER! IT'S SURE NO FUN GETTING **DUSTED** OFF
THAT WAY! OH WELL, COULD BE THAT DISINTEGRATED
DAMESEL WILL GET WHAT SHE WANTED AFTER ALL.
MAYBE SHE OUGHT TO **ASH** HER
BOYFRIEND ABOUT IT. SNIGGLE...

THE
END



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CHAPTER 1—The Electrical Brain

The Batman (Lewis Wilson), and his young assistant, Robin, the Boy Wonder (Douglas Croft), hit on the trail of an enemy saboteur ring, whose brain's girl friend, Linda (Shirley Patterson), asks the pair to help her free her uncle, Martin Warren (Gus Glasser), from the clutches of the ring. The Batman learns that the ring plans to steal the city's radium supply from the city hospital, and hurries there to prevent the theft. A terrific fight ensues, and the attempted robbery is thwarted. However, during the battle, the Batman is forced to the roof, and staggered by the rain of blows poured on him, is finally sent reeling over the ledge into space!

CHAPTER 2—The Bat Cave

The Batman lands unhurt on a poisoner's scaffolding, and returning to the roof, captures one of the gangsters with Robin's aid. Back at the Batman's hideout, the Bat Cave, the gangster reveals that a Dr. Daka (J. Carroll Nash) directs the ring from the Nexus of the Open Door. Disguised, the Batman and Robin visit the Open Door, and discover Linda a prisoner there. Working ropes over electric cables suspended between buildings, the Batman and Robin climb to the room where she is imprisoned and overcome a number of the mobsters. Then carrying the unconscious Linda, the Batman slowly makes his way back over the cables. One of the gangsters breaks a wire and seizes the rope and against the cables. Sparks and flames engulf the pair. Suddenly the Batman loses his balance and he and Linda plunge into space!

CHAPTER 3—The Living Corpse

The Batman leaps from the air as it plunges over the cliff. At home, an assailant from Washington awaits him. He is to protect the new Lockheed airplane motor. Two of the Lockheed men are abducted by Daka and transferred into Zombies. Just before a test flight, the Batman seizes himself in the plane. He sooner is he hidden, than the new Zombies enter the plane dressed

in pilots' clothes. Following Daka's radio directions, the Zombies take the plane into the air. Suddenly the doctor sees the Batman on his television screen and orders the Zombies to attack. Out of control, the plane attracts attention and suffers a direct hit, and crashes to earth!

CHAPTER 4—Poison Peril

The Zombies are killed in the crash-up, but the Batman miraculously escapes injury. Back in town, Colton, (Charles Middleton), an old friend of Linda's uncle, is searching for him. He has discovered a radium mine. Daka learns of Colton's mine and attempts to lure him to an old smelter, in order to force him to reveal the mine's location. The Batman learns of Daka's ruse, and takes Colton's place at the rendezvous. He and Robin attack the gangster and a battle royal follows. In the melee, an acid vat is tipped over, and a stream of acid hits an exposed high-tension wire. There is a blinding flash. Daka and timber fall, burying the Batman!

CHAPTER 5—Executioner Strikes

Robin raises the trap-door and pulls his pal to safety. Linda, now a Zombie, writes a note to the Batman asking him to meet her at an isolated building. Though suggesting a note, the Batman goes there. Daka's men overpower him and pack him into a crate. The crate is then tossed into a cave of ravenous alligators. It crashes down on the beasts sending them into frenzied attack!

CHAPTER 6—Doom of the Rising Sun

Robin comes to the Batman's rescue. He knocks out one of the gangsters and frees his fighting friend. The pair crash into Daka's inner sanctum, and after a terrific battle, overpower Daka and his men. The Batman orders the doctor to return Linda and her uncle from their Zombie state to normality. After doing this, Daka, makes a break for freedom, and is accidentally plunged into the alligator pit. As the police arrive to take the gang into custody, the Batman and Robin disappear—their work, for the present, is done!

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THE BIG MAN WHO CLAIMED TO BE A DOCTOR WATCHED IMPASSIVELY AS BARBARIANS FOUGHT TO THE DEATH TO AMUSE THEIR IMPERIAL CAPTORS ... NO HINT OF THE OUTRAGE, THE SMOLDERING HATE WITHIN HIM COULD BE PERMITTED TO SHOW, FOR HE WAS HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE, AND ONE PURPOSE ONLY...



ENJOYING THE GAMES, DOCTOR? I HOPE YOU ARE NOT **BORED**...

DOES HE SUSPECT?



DOES HE KNOW THAT THOSE ARE **MY PEOPLE DYING**...?

HOLD! THERE SHE IS!



MARISSA! WELCOME DEAR LADY! YOU MAY DIE KNOWING YOUR SCREAMS HAVE GIVEN US PLEASURE!



WAR OF THE WIZARDS

I ONLY WISH YOUR BELOVED **TORIN** WERE HERE TO SHARE YOUR FATE! BUT...



YOUR
WISH IS
GRANTED,
PIG!

WHAT FOLLOWS IS INCREDIBLE...A HUNDRED ARMED MEN
AGAINST ONE NAKED SAVAGE / AND YET... HOW MANY
SHEEP WOULD IT TAKE TO KILL ONE TIGER ?

NO! NO!

SAVE
ME...

EYAAA

STOP
HIM!
HE-
UNGH!

TORIN! HOW...?

NO
QUESTIONS...
JUST RUN!

THIS
WAY...I
HAVE A
HORSE
READY!

WHAT...IF A
MOUNTED PATROL!
THEY'VE SEEN
US!

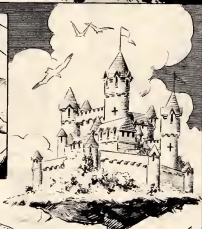
RIDING
DOUBLE, WE
CANNOT OUT-
RUN THEM!
OH TORIN!
WE ARE
DOOMED!




WHAT—!

EEEE!

SUDDENLY, TO THE
AMAZEMENT OF
THEIR PURSUERS,
AS WELL AS THEIR
OWN, THEIR STEED
BECOMES AIRBORNE!



AWED INTO SILENCE,
THEY CONTINUE THEIR
UNCANNY RIDE, AND AT
LENGTH THE TOWERS AND
BATTLEMENTS OF A CASTLE
APPEAR BEFORE THEM...
A CASTLE IN THE AIR!



WELCOME, MORTALS!
THE GREAT THANOS HAS
DECIDED TO PROLONG
YOUR MISERABLE LIVES,
FOR WHAT REASON
I KNOW NOT!

HASTEN! HE
AWAITS YOU
WITHIN... AND
YOU MUST NOT KEEP
HIM WAITING!

...AND WHATEVER
HE PROPOSES, YOU
MUST ACCEPT AT
ONCE OR YOU DIE
AT ONCE!

THANOS...?

SILENCE! BUT
FOR ME, YOU
ARE ALREADY
DEAD!

DO YOU AGREE TO DO ONE
THING FOR ME, IN EXCHANGE
FOR YOUR LIVES?

YES, I
AGREE...

GOOD!
THEN...

YOU WILL KILL THE
WIZARD AROS FOR ME!

KILL A WIZARD...? BUT...
HOW CAN I CANNOT...

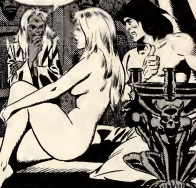
I WILL PROVIDE THE MEANS...
I CANNOT DO IT MYSELF, FOR I
LACK THE PHYSICAL PROWESS AND
THE COURAGE NECESSARY!

THIS IS THE WEAPON... I HAVE CREATED THIS JEWEL SPECIFICALLY TO COUNTER THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER...

WHEN AROS LOOKS UPON IT, HE NOT ONLY WILL LOSE HIS MAGICAL ABILITIES, BUT WILL BE RENDERED TOTALLY HELPLESS...

HHHHH... THE ~~WOMAN~~... YES! SHE WILL BE...

NO! SHE GOES WITH ME!



CALM YOURSELF, MY IMPULSIVE FRIEND! I WAS ABOUT TO SAY, SHE IS PERFECT FOR THE SUCCESS OF MY LITTLE ENDEAVOR...

FOR SHE SHALL WEAR THE JEWEL... HIDDEN BENEATH HER TUNIC...

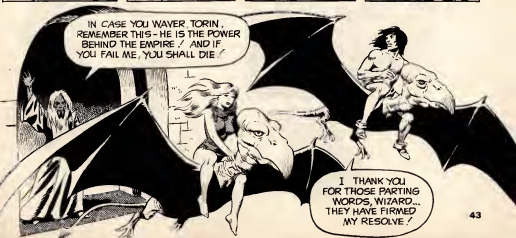
THERE! NOW, PLEASE REMEMBER... YOU MUST GET AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE BEFORE UNCOVERING IT!

TORIN, YOU MUST MAKE HIM COME TO YOU! STAY ALIVE, KILL HIS CREATURES UNTIL HE LEAVES HIS MAGIC SANCTUARY...



IN CASE YOU WAVER, TORIN, REMEMBER THIS - HE IS THE POWER BEHIND THE EMPIRE! AND IF YOU FAIL ME, YOU SHALL DIE!

I THANK YOU FOR THOSE PARTING WORDS, WIZARD... THEY HAVE FIRMED MY RESOLVE!



SOON...

THIS MUST
BE THE CAVE!
OH, TORIN...
I AM SO
AFRAID!

SO AM I,
MARISSA, BUT WE
MUST - AH, HERE
THEY ARE! THE
GUARDIANS OF
AROS!

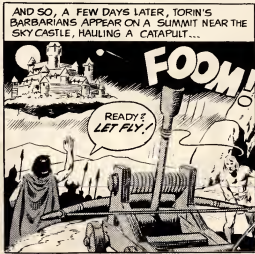
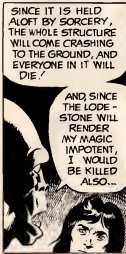
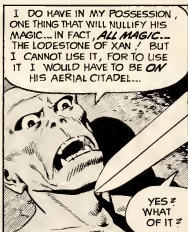
THANOS SAID TO
KILL AS MANY AS
POSSIBLE! THIS
PART IS NO HARD-
SHIP... IN FACT, IT
IS A DISTINCT
PLEASURE!

...BUT THEY
SEEM TO BE
NUMBERLESS...
MY ARMS GROW
WEARY...

THEN, AS
TORIN IS
ABOUT TO
DESPAIR...

MARISSA!
LOOK! IT
MUST
BE...

WHO DARES
TO INTRUDE
UPON THE DOMAIN
OF AROS?





THAT IS THE
END OF THANOS!
OH, TORIN!
YOU HAVE
DONE IT!

YES... BUT
FOR *ONE*
THING...

I AM SORRY,
AROS...

TORIN!

CHOP!

WHY...
WHY
DID YOU
HAVE
TO KILL
THEM
BOTH?

I MAY BE A BARBARIAN,
BUT I AM NOT STUPID.
MARISSA! THEY WERE
ENEMIES, BUT THEY
WERE BOTH FORCES
FOR THE SPREAD OF
LAW AND ORDER...

AND THEREFORE A THREAT TO
MY WAY OF LIFE! FOR I
SERVE THE GODS OF **CHAOS**,
AND I AM SWORN TO ETERNAL
WARFARE AGAINST ALL
IMPERIAL ORGANIZATION...

... AND BEYOND THAT, IT IS
ONLY COMMON SENSE TO KILL
TWO RIVAL WIZARDS WHO
HAVE TAKEN AN INTEREST
IN ME...

...FOR
SOONER
OR LATER
THEY
WOULD
FIND A
WAY TO
KILL
ME!

TORIN! YOU...
YOU SAID **RIVAL**...
DOES THAT MEAN
THAT YOU...

YES, MARISSA...
I AM A WIZARD!
BUT I PREFER NOT
TO HAVE IT KNOWN!
IT GIVES ME AN
ADVANTAGE!

NOW, COME...
WE HAVE UNFINISHED
BUSINESS WITH
THE EMPIRE!

AND SO TORIN
SET BACK CIVILIZATION
A WHILE, BUT EVENTUALLY
IT WON OUT... OR
DID IT? HEE HEE!

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TAG ALONG WITH ME ON A TOUR, BEHIND THE SCENES, OF THAT CELLULOID SHAM CALLED THE MOVIE STUDIO! HUMAN DIGNITY IS CHEAP HERE, A POUND OF FLESH TO BE BOUGHT, SOLD, TRADED FROM ONE STUDIO TO THE NEXT! ONLY RARELY DOES SOMEONE COME ALONG WHO IS TOO GOOD TO BE TOSSED AROUND LIKE OLD MEAT... **RACHEL WALSH** IS ONE OF THAT RARE BREED... AN ACTRESS... A STAR...

SHE'S HERE!
AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
SHE'S **FINALLY** HERE!

A THING OF BEAUTY!

THE SOUND STAGE GLOWS WITH NEW-FOUND WARMTH AS THE CAMERA CREW AND STAGE HANDS GATHER AROUND THE FAMED STAR-- BUT IN THE STYGIAN SHADOWS ABOVE THE STAGE, AND ALL THE CABLES AND Klieg LIGHTS AND PATCHWORK PARAPHANELIA THAT CLUTTERS THE RAFTERS-- A DARK FIGURE CROUCHES, EYES WIDE WITH WONDER...

SWIFTLY, THE FIGURE CLIMBS TO THE GROUND AND RACES ACROSS THE LOT...

I'VE GOT TO GET CLEANED UP!
I CAN'T MEET HER LOOKING LIKE **THIS!**
NOT AFTER WAITING SO LONG!

AND SO, SOON AFTER...

...SO THEN
I TOLD THAT DIRECTOR
THAT IF HE DIDN'T...

EXCUSE ME, RACHEL... HATE TO BREAK
UP YOUR LITTLE COFFEE-KLATCH... BUT
I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET **MARK GROUCHO!**
HE'LL BE IN CHARGE OF MAKE-UP
AND SPECIAL EFFECTS FOR THE FILM!

OH, MR. GROUCHO... I'VE HEARD
OF YOUR WORK! IT'S A PLEASURE TO
MEET YOU!

THE PLEASURE IS
MINE, MISS WALSH...
I ASSURE YOU!
IF YOU HAD **ANY** IDEA
HOW LONG I'VE WAITED TO
MEET YOU-- TO BE
INVOLVED IN A RACHEL
WALSH PICTURE! WHY
I FEEL AS IF I'VE DIED
AND GONE TO
HEAVEN!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO
GO **THAT** FAR, MR. GROUCHO!
I'M CERTAIN WORKING
TOGETHER WILL BE
FUN!

THANK YOU,
MISS WALSH...
I HOPE I DON'T
DISAPPOINT YOU!
... SEE YOU LATER!

DEAR GOD, WHAT
AN UGLY, PATHETIC,
LITTLE MAN!

I WOULDN'T BE TOO
DISGUSTED IF I WERE
YOU! I'VE JUST HAD A
BRAINSTORM!

SHORTLY
IN THE
HANDSOME
PRESS
AGENT'S
PLUSH
OFFICE...

LOOK,
JEFFY BOY,
YOU **JUST** RUN MY
BUSINESS...
YOU DON'T RUN MY
LIFE!

BUT RACHEL HONEY...
THIS IS THE GREATEST
PUBLICITY GIMMICK SINCE
WORLD WAR TWO! YOU'VE
HAD A LOT OF BAD PRESS
LATELY-- THEY'VE BEEN CALLING
YOU A **PRIMA DONNA**-- HOLLY-
WOOD'S BIGGEST **WITCH!** DO
THIS FOR ME AND SHIRLEY
TEMPLE WILL HAVE TO TAKE
BACK SEAT TO **YOU!**

YOU DON'T HONESTLY EXPECT ME TO **PLAY UP** TO THAT WIZENED GNOME? JUST THE THOUGHT OF HIM MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL!

THE HANDS OF THE CLOCK MOVE ON MONOTONOUSLY... DAY FOLLOWS DAY AND THE STUNTED EFFECTS MAN, BASKS IN THE LIGHT OF THE GIRL HE SECRETLY LOVES...

MAYBE, BUT IMAGINE THE HEADLINES... **RACHEL WALSH AND MARK GROUCHO... "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST" ... AND THAT MY LITTLE LOVE, IS WHY YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT!!**

GOD HOW I HATE RETAKES! I...

I... I KNOW I HAVE NO RIGHT TO ASK THIS... AND I'LL UNDERSTAND IF YOU RE... REFUSE...

O.K. CUT! THAT'S A PRINT!

...BUT... I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'D DO ME THE HONOR OF HAVING DINNER WITH ME TONIGHT?

M... MISS WALSH MAY... MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU FOR A MOMENT?

DINNER? WHY, I... UHH... I'D BE **DELIGHTED**!

I ONLY HOPE I CAN KEEP IT DOWN!

MARK GROUCHO'S FEET HARDLY TOUCH THE GROUND AS HE RACES BACK TO HIS QUARTERS.

SHE DID IT! SHE SAID **YES!** SHE'S EATING WITH ME... **ME... MARK GROUCHO! ... I'M EATING DINNER WITH RACHEL WALSH!**

RACHEL WALSH, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD! AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF WORSHIPPING HER FROM AFAR... PAINTING HER... SCULPTING HER... KNOWING EVERY CANYON AND CONTOUR OF HER BODY AS WELL AS I KNOW MY OWN... TONIGHT I'M DINING WITH THE **REAL THING!**



*BUT THERE CAN BE NO SUNSHINE
WITHOUT SHADOW... AND SO...*

AHH, WHO AM I KIDDING? LOOK AT THIS FACE!
NOBODY COULD CARE FOR THAT! I'M A CHARITY CASE
TO HER... THAT'S ALL! THIS MUST BE "TAKE A CRIPPLE TO
LUNCH" WEEK-- AND I'M HER CONTRIBUTION!...WELL, IF
THAT'S ALL IT IS, I'D BETTER MAKE THE MOST OF IT!

*NIGHT TIME IN HOLLYWOOD IS UNLIKE
AN EVENING ANYWHERE ELSE...
THERE IS AN UNDERCURRENT...
A LIFE-FORCE THAT CHARGES THE
AIR WITH EXCITEMENT... AND INTO
THIS NEON WONDERLAND STEPS
MARK GROUCHO... WITH THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD
AT HIS SIDE...*

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT
THIS MEANS TO ME, MISS
WALSH... TO SIT NEAR YOU
LIKE THIS... BREATHING
IN YOUR BEAUTY! YOU
DIM THE STARS BY
YOUR PRESENCE! I...

PLEASE, MR. GROUCHO... MARK...
CALL ME RACHEL! SOMEHOW, IT
SOUNDS SO DIFFERENT WHEN
YOU SAY IT!

GOD, IF I DON'T
WIN AN OSCAR FOR
THIS PERFORMANCE,
I NEVER WILL!

LATER, AT THE STUDIO...

THIS IS MY "ROGUE'S GALLERY!"
I SCULPTED EVERY ONE OF THESE
STATUES MYSELF... EACH IS FROM
A COSTUME AND MAKE-UP I
DESIGNED FOR A DIFFERENT
FILM!

I NEVER
REALIZED
YOUR TALENTS
WERE SO
DIVERSE!
YOU'RE A MANY-
FACETED MAN, MARK!

YEAH, LIKE ALL
OF THE SEVEN DWARVES
ROLLED INTO ONE!

THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW ARE THE HAPPIEST IN THE LITTLE MAN'S LIFE... AS ALL FLEETING FANTASIES BECOME REALITY... WHERE EVER HE GOES, WHATEVER HE DOES, RACHEL WALSH IS ALWAYS NEAR... THE NEWSPAPERS EAT IT UP... ARTICLES APPEAR EVERYWHERE, CALLING THE DUO "THE ODD COUPLE"... "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST"... BUT WHO IS TO SAY WHO THE BEAUTY IS AND WHO THE BEAST...
...FOR INEVITABLY...

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN CONTINUE THIS CHARADE, JEFF! THAT LITTLE CREEP IS GIVING ME A RASH!

HANG IN THERE JUST A LITTLE LONGER, HONEY-- THE PUBLICITY'S DOING US WONDERS!



OH, NOOOOO!!



FIGHTING THE TEARS, MARK GROUCHO RACES BACK TO HIS APARTMENT, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM...



WHY, DAMMIT... *WIMP* I KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING, I WAS KIDDING MYSELF! WHY DID I LET HER *USE* ME?



WITCH! YOU LOUSY WITCH-- WHY DID YOU HAVE TO USE WHAT LITTLE PRIDE I HAD LEFT?



OH, I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN TO... IT WAS MY FAULT, NOT YOURS! I LIED TO MYSELF... I HAVE NO RIGHT TO BLAME YOU! I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU... I PROMISE!



NIGHT HAS DRAPED ITSELF OVER THE CITY WHEN MARK GROUCHO FINALLY LEADS RACHEL WALSH TO HIS SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT...



YOUR APARTMENT? REALLY, MARK... I'M NOT *THAT* KIND OF GIRL!

DON'T WORRY... I WON'T BITE! C'MON INSIDE! I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU! I'VE BEEN SAVING IT AS A SURPRISE!

THE DOOR IS THROWN OPEN, FLOODING THE ROOM WITH BRILLIANCE, SPOTLIGHTING THE STATUARY AND PAINTINGS THAT CLUTTER THE ROOM...

I'VE DEDICATED MY LIFE, TO IMMORTALIZING YOUR BEAUTY! I DID ALL THE PAINTINGS AND THE STATUES MYSELF!

GOOD GOD!

THE LITTLE MAN'S PRIDE DRAINS OUT THROUGH THE PORES OF HIS SKIN AS HE LISTENS TO RACHEL'S ICY, KNIFE-EDGED VOICE...

DEAR LORD YOU'RE SICK... YOU'RE REALLY SICK!!

RACHEL... YOU DON'T MEAN THAT!

DON'T I? YOU'RE SOME KIND OF PERVERT... LIVING IN THIS MUSEUM! YOU... YOU...

CARED... FOR YOU? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!!! WHO COULD CARE FOR A... A... GNARLED GNOME LIKE YOU!!

GET WITH IT, MAN... YOU'RE UGLY... REALLY UGLY!!

YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT. THIS WAS ALL FOR YOU... I THOUGHT YOU CARED... I

UGLY! THE WORD REVERBERATES IN HIS HEAD... OVER AND OVER AGAIN! THIRTY YEARS OF PAIN AND MISERY... THE TAUNTS, JEERS, SNIGGERS OF EVERYONE WHO HAD EVER LAUGHED AT HIS POOR MISHAPEN FORM! **UGLY!!!** **UGLY...UGLY...** THE VOICES ROAR IN HIS HEAD, RISING TO AN UNBEARABLE DRONE...

PAIN GROWS BEHIND MARK'S EYES... PRESSURE THAT THREATENS TO BLOW OFF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD...

MARK GROUCHO'S ARMS REACH OUT THROUGH THE VEIL OF PAIN... AND, AT LAST, THE VOICES STOP!

MORNING COMES TO MOVIELAND THE SAME AS ANYWHERE ELSE... AND THE WORKING DAY GETS UNDER WAY...

MAX, HIT THE STAKE WITH A NUMBER 2 Klieg-
THAT'S IT! HARRY HOW'S THE SOUND? HEY HAS ANYBODY SEEN GROUCHO AROUND? WE CAN'T FILM THE "VIRGIN SACRIFICE" SCENE UNTIL HE DELIVERS THAT DUMMY OF RACHEL. I SOMEONE GIVE HIM A...

SORRY, I'M LATE FRED! I WAS PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HER! HOW DOES SHE LOOK?

CAREFULLY, MARK TIES THE WAXEN STATUE TO THE LARGE WOODEN STAKE, BRUSHES A CREPE HAIR TENDERLY OUT OF THE DUMMY'S EYES-- AND MOMENTS LATER...

OKAY, ROLL 'EM!

EVEN A WAX DUMMY CARVED IN HER IMAGE IS BEAUTIFUL... JUST BEAUTIFUL... HUH?

OKAY, BUDDY-BOY-- WHERE IS RACHEL?

AND DON'T LIE TO ME, PIPSQUEAK... OR I'LL...

HOLD IT! HOLD IT! LOOK! SHE'S PROBABLY OVER IN HER DRESSING ROOM GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT SCENE!

RELEASING THE LITTLE MAN, JEFF STALKS ACROSS THE LOT, RIPS OPEN THE DOOR... AND DISCOVERS...

MY GOD, A STATUE! THAT MANIAC LEFT A STATUE IN HERE! WHAT DID HE DO WITH...?

OH NO! LOOK AT HER! DEAR HEAVEN, NO!

THE RANCID SMELL OF BURNING FLESH DRIFTS THROUGH THE SET... AND JEFF RICE CHOKES ON THE FUMES...

RACHEL! OH, DEAR GOD, NO... RACHEL!

... BUT IT IS TOO LATE. JEFF RICE WATCHES HELPLESSLY AS MANY FRANTIC PEOPLE TRY DESPERATELY TO PUT OUT THE FLAMING REMAINS OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD...

FINALLY, HE STAGGERS OFF TO A DARK CORNER OF THE SET... AND GETS QUIETLY SICK TO HIS STOMACH!

POOR RACHEL... LOOKS LIKE SHE GOT WILD LITTLE MARK A BURNED UP... SO HE RETURNED THE COMPLIMENT!



VAMPIR'S FIAMES

THE NIGHT OF THE CREEPING RAIN by Diane Reed

Forget it, I keep telling myself. The old woman couldn't possibly have known what she was talking about. She was just an old woman dressed in rags, standing in an alleyway, in rags, selling apples. Of all things! Apples! Old women like that shouldn't be allowed on the street anyway. I guess maybe I shouldn't have hit her so hard. She was asking for it though, just daring me. I showed her all right. It wasn't my fault that she hit her head when she fell. Good thing no one noticed though. They'll find her in the morning, I guess. Everyone will

probably be relieved that she's gone anyway. She was just an old nuisance out there begging all the time. I bet there were quite a few people wishing she was dead. I'll just think of it as a service to the community. If she just wouldn't have opened her big mouth, I told her I didn't want any apples. But she just begged and begged. Until I couldn't stand it anymore and told her to shut her mouth and I would shut it for her if she didn't. But no, she kept going on and on, mumbling about water. What was it she said again? "Beware, you Fool! Beware, for this is the night of the Creeping Rain." That's when I hit her. Imagine a low class thing like her talking to me in that wicked tone. I don't regret it either. But still, what could she have meant? What

kind of creeping rain? Its ridiculous that's what it is. A bunch of mumbo jumbo! I was glad to finally get to my car. In fact, I made it just in time before the rain started. Just a spring shower, but I hated to get my nice suit all wet. I've always disliked rainy weather. Especially having to drive in it. It was one of those rush hours Fridays and I was glad to get off the turnpike. It was still raining, but was turning into a fine mist. Just a few more minutes on this dirt road and I'd finally be home. I don't know why they don't fix this road anyway. It gets so muddy in the rain. I guess because there's not that much traffic on it. But I prefer the country to the crowded suburbs. I'm sure glad it's Friday because this is the beginning of my vacation. I have one

whole glorious week off. They'll never connect that dead old woman with me. So many people pass at that time of day. I'll just tell everyone that asks that she was alive when I saw her last. Oh drat, the rain is starting in again. Hope it doesn't last all weekend. Let me hear the weather report on the radio. "Rain finally clearing up. None reported in this vicinity, folks, so look forward to a nice comfortable weekend with the chances of rain near zero." That's impossible! Its raining cats and dogs over here! That man must not ever look out of his window. Unless... Oh no, it can't be! That old woman! No, I won't believe her! What's that! It looks like a hand... rain... harder... harder... that hand... creeping... closer. Stop! Aieeeeee...!

THE PROTECTIVE FATHER

by Henry C. Brennan

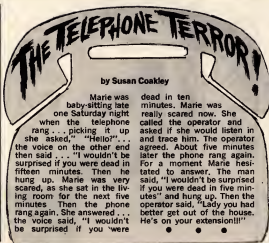
The small child, scared and frightened, saw the burglars break in. When they finished, he heard one of them say, "The kid saw us. Let's finish him off!" As the burglars came closer, the small child desperately prayed for help. Just then, a man, with dirt and mud covering his clothes, burst into the room. One of the burglars looked at the man's face and let out an unearthly scream. Soon, they had all run off and the man walked away.

The child's mother rushed in and said, "Are you alright?" The child replied, "Daddy was here! I saw him! He scared the robbers away!" "But that's impossible!", the mother replied, "Your father died when he was attacked by a wild animal three years ago!" She sobbed; "Tore his face to shreds".

END



This sketch sent in by Bob Garrison of Independence, Mo.



Marie was baby-sitting late one Saturday night when the telephone rang... picking it up she asked, "Hello"... the voice on the other end then said "...I wouldn't be surprised if you were dead in fifteen minutes. Then he hung up. Marie was very scared, as she sat in the living room for the next five minutes. Then the phone rang again. She answered... the voice said, "I wouldn't be surprised if you were

dead in ten minutes. Marie was really scared now. She called the operator and asked if she would listen in and trace him. The operator agreed. About five minutes later the phone rang again. For a moment Marie hesitated to answer. The man said, "I wouldn't be surprised if you were dead in five minutes" and hung up. Then the operator said, "Lady you had better get out of the house. He's on your extension!!!"



Kevin Richert's above sketch shows potential talent.

RESULTS OF THE FIRST MISS VAMPIRE CONTEST!

The first New York regional Miss American Vampire Contest was held this past summer at Palisades Amusement Park, Palisades, New Jersey. Judges of the contest were,

Nancy Barrett, star of "House of Dark Shadows"; Chauncey Howell of Women's Wear Daily; Nick Potter of the Joe Franklin Show; Julie Baumgold of New York Mag-

azine; and Ernest Leogrande of the New York Daily News. The well known New Jersey radio and T.V. Disk Jockey, Hal Jackson was M.C. Highlight of the contest was the

appearance of T.V. personality, Jonathan Frid, star of the popular daily television serial, "House of Dark Shadows".



(Top left) Jonathan Frid, star of House of Dark Shadows, crowns Christine Domaniecki, Miss American Vampire, New York regional winner. (Top right) Christine Domaniecki, winner of the Palisades Park Miss American Vampire contest, with first runner-up, Lori Evan (left), and second runner-up, Marlene Willoughby (right). (Below left) Finalists in the New York regional Miss American Vampire contest at Palisades Park. Winner was Christine Domaniecki, far right. Christine, (below right) applying 'BAT' tattoo (a-la-VAMPIRELLA) before contest.



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PROLOGUE:
1993

MANKIND REACHES THE GREAT CRISIS OF OVER-POPULATION, FOOD SHORTAGES, POLLUTION, SOCIAL DECAY, AND A DWINDLING OXYGEN SUPPLY.



THROUGH EYES GROWN WEAK AND BURNING WITH MALNUTRITION AN ENVIOUS HUMANKIND STARE AT THEIR TV SETS TO WITNESS THE STAR-SHIP "LAST HOPE" SEAR IT'S WAY THROUGH SMOGGY STRATOSPHERE...

GOT MY DINNER!

QUIET! MANKIND IS MAKING IT'S GREATEST LEAP FORWARD!

BLASTOFF! AND THE PRAYERS OF THE WORLD ARE WITH THEM TONIGHT!



NOW FOLKS! FEEL YOU'RE NOT TRAVELING AS MUCH AS YOU USED TO? WELL, SEE WHAT THE MAKERS OF...

THE 'LAST HOPE' CARRIES THREE COUPLES INTO THE SPANGLED VOID OF SPACE, SEEKING A FRESH CLEAN WORLD TO COLONIZE...

COMPUTREX NOW FIGURES THAT AT WARP-SIX STAR DRIVE, WE CAN FIND AN EARTH-LIKE PLANET AND RETURN IN 28 STAR-WARP YEARS...

OR EXACTLY 100 YEARS, BY EARTH'S TIME ...



THINK THERE'LL BE AN EARTH TO RETURN TO?



WELL MYSTIC MITES, WE'VE POLLUTED YOUR MIND WITH A PEEK AT OUR FUTURE, NOW LET'S GO A LITTLE FURTHER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ONE MAN TRIES TO SPAN A--



REGENERATION GAP

2093,

AND ONLY ONE MAN SURVIVES TO EASE HIS MIDDLE AGED FRAME DOWN- LADDER ON TO A PLANET THAT THROUGH A QUIRK IN EINSTEIN'S UNIVERSE HAS AGED OVER A HUNDRED YEARS TO HIS TWENTYEIGHT... EARTH!... ONCE HIS HOME... NOW NOTHING TO GREET HIM BUT A GLISTENING PLASTIC SHEATH THAT STRETCHES FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES WHERE LIFE ONCE FLOURISHED...



TWENTY EIGHT YEARS! SO LONG! SO MUCH EXPLORATION, ADVENTURE...HAZARD AND GLORY... SO MUCH DEATH... SO FUTILE...

HE MOVES SO AUTOMATICALLY IT TAKES HIM A MOMENT TO NOTE THE PAVEMENT IS SOFT AND RESILIENT... LIKE A DREAM...



WELL /S THIS ALL A DREAM? AM I PERHAPS STILL DRIFTING ALONE... IN SPACE... ALONE? GOD! ALONE?!



I'M BOUNCING... MUST BE DREAMING... I MUST. I AM STILL ALONE... IN SPACE!



IN A PANIC-STRIKEN ATTEMPT TO WAKEN, HE FORCES HIMSELF INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS...



HE FEELS
THE WARM
SOFT
PAVEMENT
BUCKLE
AROUND
HIM AS HE
DREAMS
OF THE
RELIEF
OF
MADNESS
AND
HEARS A
VOICE
IN HIS
MIND...

HE THINKS HE'S DREAMING, HE'S COME A LONG WAY... HIS FRIENDS, HIS CREW ARE
ALL DEAD...



HE'S ALONE... WANTS AN ANSWER...
TO KNOW WHY... HE SHALL SOON KNOW...

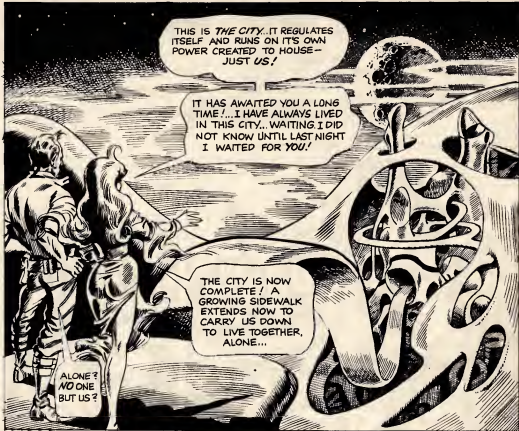
GOLDEN FINGERTIPS OF DAWN REFLECT OFF PLASTICENE AND
SEEK HIS EYELIDS, STROKE THEM, AND COMPEL THEM TO
OPEN TO... THE SAME WEARYSOME TERRAIN... BUT HE NOTES:



I'M
NOT
ALONE!







THIS IS *THE CITY*...IT REGULATES ITSELF AND RUNS ON ITS OWN POWER CREATED TO HOUSE—JUST US!

IT HAS AWAITED YOU A LONG TIME!...I HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THIS CITY...WAITING.I DID NOT KNOW UNTIL LAST NIGHT I WAITED FOR YOU!

THE CITY IS NOW COMPLETE! A GROWING SIDEWALK EXTENDS NOW TO CARRY US DOWN TO LIVE TOGETHER, ALONE...

ALONE?
NO ONE
BUT US?



MUST I REPEAT? YOU MISTRUST ME! ALL THAT I TELL YOU NOW IS TRUTH, I HAVE NO REASON TO LIE ABOUT THE PAST!

SORRY...
REALLY, I...



ENOUGH! THIS CITY STANDS AS A MEMORIAL TO A WAR WAGED BETWEEN MANKIND AND ENVIRONMENT!

WHEN YOU LEFT EARTH ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, ALL LIFE WAS DYING AS A RESULT OF AIR, SOIL AND WATER POLLUTION...

IN THE OIL SLICKED SEA WHERE ONCE ALL LIFE BEGAN RESIDUES AND FILTH COLLECTED WITH CHEMICALS AND CARCASSES OF DECAYING FISH...



THE WASTES AND ACIDS COMMINGLED WITH PROTO-PLASMS IN THE OXYGENLESS SEA: CELLS RAPIDLY DIVIDED MALIGNANTLY, SPARKED BY RADIO HEAVY WATER FROM ATOMIC GENERATORS...



SOMEHOW, BY A PROCESS ONLY THE UNIVERSE ITSELF KNOWS LIFE BEGAN AGAIN IN THE SEA!! AND THE WASTES OF THE WORLD, WHICH ONCE THREATENED THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURES BALANCE NOW BECAME A LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THEIR OWN!!



IT'S CAPACITY FOR LEARNING GREW AS IT EXPANDED, AS IT DEVoured THINGS, ITS NERVOUS SYSTEM RETAINED ALL MEMORY TRACINGS OF ALL MATTER IT DEVoured...



...REMEMBERING EVERYTHING THAT IT ABSORBED, HAD EVER KNOWN OR FELT!

IT'S SIZE AND INTELLECT WENT FROM STUNTED TO SUPREME! IT SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED THE CITY-STATE OF NEW YORK AND MANAGED TO PILOT FIGHTER AIR-CRAFT, TELEPATHICALLY CONTROLLING THE CARCASSES OF DEAD ANIMALS AND MEN TO DO SO.

MANKIND'S RUTHLESS INTELLIGENCE HAD MET IT'S ABLEST OPPONENT...



THE PILOT'S BREATH EASES FROM HIS GILLING STOMACH AS A BREEZE, PUNGENT WITH ANTISEPTIC FRESHNESS, DRIES PERSPIRATION FROM HIS DEFEATED, COLD BROW...

ENOUGH! I CAN GUESS!
WE PERISHED! BUT...
YOU SURVIVE?



THE NEW LIFE FORMS
REMEMBERS ALL...
IT REMEMBERS THE
"LAST HOPE"
PITIFUL "LAST HOPE"!

KNOWING YOU'D
RETURN, IT KEPT
ME HERE,
WAITING... FOR
YOU...



NOW YOU KNOW
ALL. YOU ARE
READY TO
BECOME PURE!



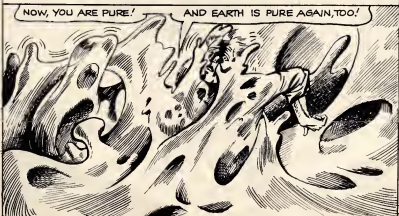
YOUR SKIN
SO FRESH...



IN THE SHADOW OF A SECOND, AWARENESS THROBS FROM THE PILOT'S SHUDDERING STROKING FINGERTIPS, TO THE TORTURED CELLS OF HIS MIND, AWARENESS THAT IN A WORLD OF LIVING DECAY, REAL LIFE DOES NOT BELONG...

NOW, YOU ARE PURE!

AND EARTH IS PURE AGAIN, TOO!



GUESS THE PILOT
WISHES HE WAS
DREAMING ALONE
IN SPACE AFTER
ALL: AND, OF COURSE
WE KNOW NONE
OF IT COULD
ACTUALLY HAPPEN,
DON'T WE? NOW
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE
ME, I'M HAVING
TROUBLE CHECKING
THE POLLUTION
INDEX, THE
SMOG KEEPS
GETTING IN YOUR
EYES...





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